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Remarks at BBC Today-Chatham House Lecture

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you very much. Well, listening to Jack, I'm sure you understand why I value his counsel and his friendship and why the people of the United States are so pleased that we have such a good friend in the Foreign Secretary here in the United Kingdom. The partnership that we forged over this past year, I think is a reflection of our nations' historic alliances, but more than that is a reflection of the values that we share as peoples, because ultimately the work of governments cannot be sustained, particularly democratic governments if there is not a deep bond between their peoples. And the peoples of Great Britain and of the United States, of course, have that historic bond.

Today, on behalf of President Bush, I would like to thank the citizens and the government of Great Britain for the willingness to share in the sacrifices for freedom, no more so than in the last several years since the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York and on the Pentagon really revealed again to America in ways that we had not seen for a very, very long time in our history, our own vulnerability to outside attack and to the forces of hostility to democratic values. And, of course, on July 7th when Britain also experienced that hostility, I hope that Britain felt the support of the United States in our joint desire to defeat those forces that are so hostile to our democratic principles.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice speaks at the BBC Today-Chatham House Lecture. (U.S. Embassy photo by Richard Lewis)

I also want to thank Jack for inviting me here to Blackburn and for allowing me to share the stage with Jim Naughtie. Thank you very much for the work of the BBC in this and I am really honored that Lord Hurd would be here, a great public servant whom we've all admired

for many years. Thank you very much for being here. Jack invited me to see a different side of British society, one that's not normally seen by Secretaries of State and already I have seen how this old cotton city is finding new prosperity and building airplanes and a knowledge-based economy. And of course, I've just had the opportunity to walk around the "pitch" – is that right? -- of the Blackburn Rovers football club. And, Jack, if Blackburn is "the center of the world," then I suspect that this stadium is the center of the center of the center of the world. (Laughter.)

When Jack was in Birmingham last October, I took him to, as he said, a University of Alabama football game. Now, unless you've experienced American college football in the Southeastern Conference, you just don't know what that means. I think it's safe to say, though, that even though Jack loved the experience, I'm not absolutely certain that he knew what was going on. (Laughter.) Had I had the opportunity to watch Blackburn play Wigan here next week, I'm certain that I would have been just as clueless. And it is true that the European stereotype of America -- Americans that we do not have the attention span for a 90-minute game that doesn't have that much scoring and where there isn't full contact. Yeah, it's true. (Laughter.) But I would remind you that the man who keeps the ball out of the Rovers' goal is an American, Brad Friedel. (Applause.)

I'm delighted to be here to deliver this lecture. As a professor myself, I like to take every opportunity to put on my academic hat, to reflect broadly on the issues of the day. So this afternoon, I want to talk about an idea -- an idea that has defined the modern era since the dawn of the Enlightenment, an idea that has now captured the imagination of a majority of humanity, and made our world more secure as a result, so that idea is liberal democracy.

What do I mean by "liberal" democracy? Well, first of all, I mean capital "L" in Liberal, as in Liberalism, the theory of politics that took shape in the minds of Englishmen like Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, and even a Scot or two, like Adam Smith. The ideas of Liberalism were, of course, later refined and applied and written into the American Constitution by men like Hamilton, and Jefferson and Madison. And all of these individuals were trying, in their own way, to solve one of history's oldest quandaries: How can individuals with different interests, and different backgrounds, and different religious beliefs, live together peacefully and avoid the evil extremes of politics: civil war and tyranny, or as they would have said, the state of nature or the oppression of the state?

In their answer to this question, the theorists of Liberalism transformed politics forever. They declared that all human beings possessed equal dignity and certain natural rights -- among these, the right to live in liberty, to enjoy security, to own property and to worship as they pleased. These universal rights, established and embodied in institutions and enshrined in law, would then establish the principled limits on state power. But that was not all. They had another equally bold idea: For government to be truly legitimate, they argued, it had to be blessed by the consent of the governed.

Now, those were truly revolutionary ideas, and not surprisingly, they inspired revolutions. You made yours here in Britain in 1688. We made ours, after a few false starts, in 1776 and 1789. And I do not, therefore, mean to imply that there is only one model of liberal democracy. There is not. Even two countries as similar as Britain and the United States embraced liberal democracy on our own terms, according to our own traditions and our cultures and our experiences. That has been the case for every country and every people that has begun the modest quest for justice and freedom -- whether it was France in 1789; or Germany and Japan after World War II; or nations across Asia, and Africa, and Latin America during these past decades; or in countries like Ukraine, and Afghanistan, and Iraq today.

The appeal of liberal democracy is desirable, but its progress has not been even nor inevitable and there's a reason for that. The challenge of liberal democracy is always two-fold: to ensure

majority rule and to respect minority rights, to strengthen communities and to liberate individuals, to empower government and to limit that power at the same time. And for societies accustomed to thinking in zero-sum terms, or for diverse communities that have never shared power among themselves, liberal democracy can seem difficult and frustrating and even threatening, and that feeling is entirely understandable.

Too often, we forget how long and hard liberal democracy has been for us. At times in our history and cities like Blackburn and Birmingham for that matter, the challenge of liberal democracy seemed so severe that it would split societies in two.

Once the cotton business moved out of this city, inequality and alienation were so rampant that many thought a revolution was not just likely, but inevitable. In my hometown of Birmingham, Alabama, the legacy and the birthmark of slavery persisted for a century in the brutal and dehumanizing form of segregation. I spent the first 13 years of my life without a white classmate. It was when we moved to Denver, Colorado, that I had my first white classmate. And one Sunday morning in 1963, four little girls, including my good friend Denise McNair, were murdered in church by a terrorist bomb.

So even today, we know that we are still wrestling with the two-fold challenges of liberal democracy. Consider, for example, our efforts to strengthen national security and to protect civil liberties at the same time. In the attacks of 9/11 or 7/7 here in Britain, the United States and Britain saw the true threat of global terrorism. No matter of just police work of course, because if we wait for terrorists to attack, then 3,000 people die on one September morning or dozens are murdered on their commute to work. This forces us to think anew about how we will keep our societies both open and safe at the same time and that is no easy task, and we're all finding our own solutions within our own democratic systems.

I know that there is a lot concern in Britain as well as in Europe and in other parts of the world, that the United States is not adequately guaranteeing both our need for security and our respect for the law. We in America welcome the free exchange of opinions with our allies about this issue, especially here in place like Britain. But I also want to say that no one should ever doubt America’s commitment to justice and the rule of law. President Bush has stated unequivocally, as have I that the United States is a nation of laws and we do not tolerate any American, at home or abroad, engaging in acts of torture. We also have no desire to be the world’s jailer. We want the terrorists that we captured to stand trial for their crimes. But we also recognize that we are fighting a new kind of war, and that our citizens will judge us harshly if we release a captured terrorist before we are absolutely certain that he does not possess information that could prevent a future attack, or even worst, if we meet that terrorist again on the battlefield.

Now, these difficult issues, still for us affirm the value of liberal democracy. But from our present and past experience, we know that liberal democracy is no panacea. It is a living regime, a never-ending conversation, a perpetual struggle to balance democratic demands within the limitations of Liberalism. This is genuine liberal democracy and this is its genius, its flexibility and its dynamism, how it helps diverse societies and diverse peoples reconcile their differences peacefully. Even for mature liberal democracies like ours, with centuries of experience, these balancing acts are often painstaking and time-consuming and frustrating. So when we talk about young democracies, like those emerging in the Broader Middle East today, we must do so with great humility and with great patience and with great sympathy for their historic undertaking.

Too often, I think, we forget this perspective. Recent elections in places like Egypt and the Palestinian territories -- the freest by far in both of those places -- have led some to argue that our policy of supporting democratic change in this region is creating not liberal democracy, but illiberal democracy: elected governments that view no inherent limitations to state power. Some American and European commentators even argue that democracy is impossible in the

Middle East, and that perhaps it should not be tried for fear of its consequences in destabilizing the Middle East. Now, this criticism seems to assume that our support for democratic reform in the Middle East is disrupting somehow a stable status quo there. But do we really think that this was the case?

Does anyone think that the Lebanese people were better off under the boot of Syria? Does anyone think that Yasser Arafat pretending to make peace while supporting terrorism was better for the Palestinian people? Does anyone think that the Middle East was more secure when Saddam Hussein was massacring the Iraqi people, invading his neighbors, using weapons of mass destruction against his neighbors and his people, funding terrorism, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and exploiting a failed sanctions regime for billions of dollars? And who today would honestly defend Arab authoritarianism, which has created a sense of despair and hopelessness so desperate that it feeds an ideology of hatred that leads people to strap bombs to their bodies and fly airplanes into building? The old status quo was unstable. Any sense of stability was a false sense of stability. It was not serving any interest and democratic reform had to begin.

It's hard to imagine, as some do, how this process of reform -- it's hard to imagine for some critics how this process of reform might go forward in the Broader Middle East. But I can tell you this; it cannot go forward in the Middle East without freeing its citizens to voice their choices. For decades, authoritarian regimes in this region have completely closed off the political space of their countries. If things remain as they are, it is not very likely that a vibrant civil society is somehow going to emerge under the heel of authoritarianism. Real change will begin and is beginning in the Middle East when citizens -- men and women -- are free to make demands of their government. It would be illiberal in the extreme to think that disagreeing with a people’s free choice means that we should deny them the freedom to choose altogether.

Elections are the beginning of every democracy, but of course they are not the end. Effective institutions are essential to the success of all liberal democracies. And by institutions I mean pluralistic parties, transparent and accountable legislatures, independent judiciaries, free press, active civil society, market economies and, of course, a monopoly for the state on the means of violence. One cannot have one foot in terrorism and one foot in politics. Now, if these institutions that transform a government of imperfect citizens -- it is these institutions that transform a government of imperfect citizens into a government of enduring laws.

I think that we in the West need to reflect long and hard before we write off entire societies as inherently despotic because of some notion of their cultures. Remember, cultural determinists were once so certain that democracy would never work in Asia because of "Asian values," or in Africa because of tribalism, or in Latin America because of its military juntas. It was even said, in my own lifetime, that blacks in America were "unfit" for democracy -- too "childlike," too "unready," too "incapable," too "unwanting" of self-government.

The criticism assumes that human beings are slaves to their culture, not the authors of it. Liberal democracy is unique because it is both principle and process, an end toward which people strive, and the means by which they do so. The daily work of negotiation, and cooperation, and compromise, the constant struggle to balance majority rule with individual rights -- this democratic process is how people create a democratic culture.

All too often, cultural determinists misunderstand culture in many places in the world. But we've seen it most especially lately in Iraq. It is certainly true that Iraq rests on the major fault lines of ethnicity and religion in the Middle East. It is also true that, for many centuries, Iraqis have settled their differences through coercion and violence, rather than compromise and politics.

But in the past two generations, it was Saddam Hussein who took a society that was already rife with sectarian and religious divisions and drove it to the brink of the state of nature. He committed genocide and filled mass graves with 300,000 souls. He slaughtered entire villages of Shia and Kurds. And he carried out a nationwide policy of ethnic cleansing to make Iraq's Sunni minority dominant throughout the country. To be certain, he repressed a good number of Sunnis, too. So when we look at Iraq today, we must take care to separate the culture of its people from the near-term legacy of a tyrant. And we must support the millions of Iraqi patriots who are striving nobly to redeem their country.

This is an incredibly difficult endeavor, but the Iraqis are moving forward. In just three years, the people of Iraq have regained sovereignty and voted in free elections. They've written and ratified a constitution, then voted again, and their elected leaders are now working to form a national government. This steady progress has occurred in the face of truly horrific violence. Terrorist attacks, like the one that destroyed the Golden Mosque in Samarra, seek to inflame Iraq's divisions and tear the country apart. But in response to that, some Iraqis have given into the temptation to take justice into their own hands, to engage in reprisal killings.

Yet, at the same time, we are witnessing something else, something very hopeful. After the Samarra mosque bombing, Iraq's new democratic institutions helped to contain popular passions. Iraq's leaders joined together to stay the hand of vengeance and violence in their communities. In these actions and events, we see the early contours of a democratic culture, forged in cooperation and strengthened by compromise.

The majority of Iraqis are formulating their own democratic answer to the question that first inspired the Enlightenment four centuries ago: How can different individuals and communities live together in peace, avoiding both the state of nature and the tyranny of the state? With time, with painstaking effort, and with our steadfast support, Iraqis will build up their fragile democratic culture, and eventually, many decades from now, people will take it for granted; that that democratic culture was always to be, just as we in America and Britain now take for granted our democratic culture.

In a tale of two cities, that the Secretary and I have now visited, Birmingham and Blackburn, Britain and the United States have seen how the impossible dreams of yesterday can become the inevitable facts of today. Who would have imagined, fifty years ago, that Birmingham would have been a thriving and desegregated capital of the New South? Or that Blackburn today would be revitalizing and modernizing and growing into a hub of enterprise for Northwest England and beyond?

Someday, people in Baghdad and Beirut and Cairo and, yes, in Tehran will say the same thing about their great cities. They will wonder how anyone could ever have doubted the future of liberal democracy in their countries. But most of all, they will remember fondly those fellow democracies, like Britain and the United States, and dozens of others, who stood with them in their time of need – believing that advancing the cause of freedom is the greatest hope for peace in our time.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

QUESTION: Rosemary Hollis. I'm Director of Research at Chatham House, and not only from there but in general, myself personally, welcome this opportunity to have access to you. Now, I wonder if I could point something out and base my question on that. Whilst it is a very, very close alliance and British commitment to the United States in the last three, four years is probably without parallel, that not only means that we know we are in a sense junior partner, but we also feel that we're not always sure where you're going to lead. I wonder if you could give us some reassurance to the effect that some lessons have been learned from

some of the mistakes made over the last three years which will be used to judge situations going forward.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, thank you. And first of all, I'm delighted you are at Chatham House, which is a fantastic institution, and I have from time to time been able to take advantage of the work of Chatham House, so thank you for that and thank you, Lord Hurd, for that.

First of all, we have partners in the world and I don't think of it in terms of junior partners and subordinate partners. We have partners in the world. And it starts from shared common values that those partnerships exist. You then, of course, have goals in common and you can sometimes then have disagreements about tactics. There's no doubt about that. And the only way to overcome those differences is through constant dialogue and constant discussion. And I think if you look back over the record of the last three-plus years, you would see that there's been extraordinary consultation, discussion, problem-solving, between the United States and Great Britain -- how often the Prime Minister and the President have met, how often Jack Straw and first Colin Powell and now I have talked. And I can assure you, these are not conversations in which I say, "Here's what the United States is going to do. Would you like to come along?" That's not the way that it goes. It really is a discussion about how we are going to jointly move forward.

Now, as to whether you learn, of course, you learn lessons. If you are impervious to the lessons of the period that you've been just been out of, you're really rather brain dead; you're not thinking. Of course, you're trying to trying to learn lessons. I've often said that one question that often comes to me is, well, tell me about the mistakes you've made. And I've said many, many times I am quite certain that there are going to be dissertations written about the mistakes of the Bush Administration and I will probably even oversee some of them when I go back to Stanford. But one of the things that's very difficult to tell in the midst of big historic change is what was actually a good decision and what was a bad decision. And I will tell you that decisions, when you look at them in historical perspective that were thought at the time to be brilliant, turn out to have been really rather bad, and vice versa.

And so I think what you have to do is to make certain that you've got the right strategic choices and the right strategic decisions, and you're going to make a host of tactical mistakes along the way. I believe strongly that it was the right strategic decision that Saddam Hussein had been a threat to the international community long enough that it was time to deal with that threat, that you were not going to have a different kind of Middle East with Saddam Hussein at the center of it, and that it was best, once having overthrown that dictator, to set on a course of democratic development in Iraq.

You know, there were people at the time of the decision to overthrow Saddam Hussein who actually said, oh, yes, you should get rid of Saddam Hussein but your goal shouldn't be democracy in Iraq; your goal should be to find another strongman for Iraq because Iraqis will never be able to self-govern. Now, that would have been a tactical decision that I think would have been a huge mistake. But as we're in the midst of this in Iraq, are there people who probably think, yeah, it would have been a better idea to put a strongman in his place? I just don't agree.

So my point to you is that yes, I know we've made tactical errors -- thousands of them, I'm sure. This could have gone that way or that could have gone that way. But when you look back in history, what will be judged is did you make the right strategic decisions. And if you spend all of your time trying to judge this tactical issue or that tactical issue, I think you miss the larger sweep.

Now, absolutely we think all the time about what can be done better, what needs to be adjusted. But I think I just think of it a little bit differently than trying now to catalogue every

"mistake" and react to it.

QUESTION: Robin Oakley, CNN. Secretary of State, you have expressed your sympathy this morning for Iran over the earthquakes, but politics must go on. And before you came to the center of the world, you were on the continent of Europe discussing with the P-5 and Germany what next steps could be taken to persuade the Iranians to pull back from the uranium enrichment program. Aren't you worried that the tactics being adopted by the P-5 and others so far are enabling the manipulators of an imperfect democracy in Iran to build up sympathy with the Iranian people?

And in discussing those next steps, can you tell us what next practical steps you can see? It's quite obvious that the difficulties you had in getting an anodyne statement out of the Security Council just to toss the issue back to the IAEA for 30 days hasn't impressed the Iranians at all. So what can be done to put real pressure on them? Do you agree with your host here in Blackburn, Jack Straw, that sanctions could be involved? Do you see the slightest chance of getting Russia or China to agree to sanctions?

And if you could clear up one other point, Jack Straw keeps telling us that he talks to people in the U.S. Administration and they share his view that military action will never be used. But your President keeps telling us that all options remain on the table, which must include military action. Can you tell us which is right?

SECRETARY RICE: Let me try a few of them. First of all, one can express and deeply mean sympathy for and willingness to help the Iranian people without endorsing what I would not even call an imperfect democracy. I think when you have a Guardian Council that chooses a thousand people who can run, I don't really find the use of the word "democracy" in that sentence. It's rather like there used to be a Democratic Republic of Germany and there used to be a -- there still is a Democratic Republic of Korea. So we have to be careful about the use of the term.

As to whether or not people are being driven toward their government, I do think it's immensely important and it's not easy to do, it's not an easy point to break through, that we have no quarrel with the Iranian people. The United States doesn't. Great Britain doesn't. Germany doesn't. None of us have a quarrel with the Iranian people. In fact, the Iranian regime is having an unaccountable few who are frustrating the good wishes, the good aspirations, of the Iranian people, who over time have demonstrated that they would like a truly democratic society.

And in this nuclear matter, it is enormously important that we get the message through to the Iranian people that it is not the international community that is isolating Iran; it is the Iranian regime that is isolating Iran. No one is saying that Iran should not have civil nuclear power. We accept that Iran may need civil nuclear power. But given the behavior of the Iranian regime over the last 18 years with the IAEA, it isn't possible to conceive of the use of the technologies of reprocessing and enrichment on Iranian territory. And again, we have to make that argument in a way that shows that there is a proper choice for the Iranian regime that would not result in its isolation.

So I would hope that rather than looking at the P-5 and saying, well, the P-5 is out to make it difficult for the Iranian people, that the only reason the Iranian -- that the P-5 would make it difficult for Iran is if the Iranian regime does not respond to the just demands of the international system.

As to what will happen in the future, I warn all the time that it's very easy in diplomacy to read the latest headline and say, oh, well, that's a failed diplomatic effort. I can remember that we were also never going to get this issue to the Security Council because several months ago there was some sense that Russia would never permit it to go to the Security Council.

Well, we're now in the Security Council. I can remember when I first became Secretary, I came to Europe -- I was actually here first in Britain -- and people said, oh, the United States and its European allies are split and Europe is trying to mediate between Iran and the United States. We're far past that.

So diplomacy, as Lord Hurd said, takes time. It takes some patience. It takes working through issues. Sometimes you agree, sometimes you don't. When we did the presidential statement, yes, we changed some language that we would like, Russia changed some language that it would have liked. So this is a process and where we end up in this process in terms of the potential for sanctions, which I do agree with the Foreign Secretary have to be on the agenda, I think will be, in part, dependent on whether the Iranian regime decides to respond to the just demands of the international system.

And as to military force, the American President never takes any option off the table. You don't want the American President to take any option off the table. But we also recognize that that is not what is on the agenda now. We are in a process that we believe can work diplomatically. I do think the Iranians are worried. And for all of the bravado about they're not really worried, it's very interesting that every time we get close to the Security Council, they suddenly become interested in the Russian proposal or the EU proposal. I think they actually do worry quite a lot about isolation.

QUESTION: I'm a local business person. I very much enjoyed your lecture, Secretary of State. To promote global harmony, would you consider setting up a liaison committee with membership from the USA, UK and Australia?

SECRETARY RICE: I'm sorry, a liaison committee for?

QUESTION: A specific liaison committee with membership from the USA, UK and Australia.

MR. NAUGHTIE: To do what?

QUESTION: To promote global harmony.

SECRETARY RICE: Oh. Well, we obviously have, Jack and I, a relationship with our counterpart in Australia, Alexander Downer. I was just there. And I would have a suggestion. I actually think that there are some tasks, some issues that are actually better taken on not by government but rather by people. One of the strengths that we see is when populations, people-to-people, decide. Either the business community decides that it wishes to get together or academics, universities, decide. Chatham House is a fine place where academics from all over the world come together. That youth get together. And it doesn't always have to be the government that pursues those things and so -- global harmony is quite important. I'm not actually sure that the governments are the best to pursue it, but rather that people-to-people ties might work better.

QUESTION: On a related question, given what Lord Hurd said about institution building after World War II, and perhaps a decision not to go down that road for reasons that we can understand in the early '90s, do you think that was a missed opportunity?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I've thought a lot about that because, actually, my academic work is on institutions and how they govern -- the state of nation matrix, so to speak. I agree with Lord Hurd that we didn't create new big international institutions, but there has been a significant evolution of some of those institutions; for instance, NATO. I remember after the Cold War ended -- I was, by the way, a specialist on the Warsaw Pact, which shows what a dinosaur I am -- and there were people who said, well, the Warsaw Pact has gone out of business, it won't be long before NATO follows. Rather, NATO has transformed itself

consistent with its purposes of creating an environment under which democracies can pursue peace. It's transformed itself into a real magnet for the newly democratizing states of Eastern Europe. So NATO is now at 26. It has at the table Poland and Romania and Lithuania and Latvia. This is an enormous transformation.

NATO, of course, has also no longer any arguments about what's out of area. NATO is supporting African Union forces in Sudan. NATO is in Afghanistan. It is training Iraqi military forces. And so there's been such an evolution of that institution that I think you could argue it has become, in a sense, anew.

And if I could make just one other point, I'm a major advocate of United Nations reform. I do think that the reform agenda is extremely important so that the United Nations can be revitalized and made to be relevant to the 21st century. We're in that process.

One thing that is sometimes not seen also is the growth of institutions in other parts of the world that perhaps are not so focused on here in Europe. So part of the United States institution building is in strengthening ASEAN, for instance, among Southeast Asian countries, the Asia-Pacific Economic Council, which has all of the Pacific Rim countries involved in it. And so there is a lot of -- the Organization of American States, where we spend a lot of effort. So one of the answers to new institutions is that it's happening in new regions of the world on a regional basis rather than on a global one.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) Chatham House. The new conservative guru, Professor John Mearsheimer of University of Chicago, argues that war between the United States and China is inevitable. Do you agree? And if you don't, do you think China's rise is a threat to regional or world peace?

SECRETARY RICE: I do not see events of this -- really, any human event is inevitable. We make choices that lead us to conflict or lead us to peace. And with China, we are seeing the rise of an important state that is going to be influential one way or another, and it has been the goal and the policy of the United States to try and help create the circumstances under which the rise of China will be beneficial to the international system and will be peaceful.

Part of the way that we've tried to do that is to be very strong advocates of the integration of China into world institutions that are rules-based, like the World Trade Organization. Because with this huge economy in China, it has to be operating on a rules basis or it will be a problem for the international economy.

We have been very active in trying to manage what is currently the biggest security threat in Northeast Asia, which is the North Korean nuclear program, with China really at the center of the six-party talks.

We have our differences with China on human rights. We have our differences with China on some economic issues and trade issues. We have had our differences with China on a number of other questions. But it is a good relationship, it's a sound relationship, and it's one that while recognizing and talking openly about those differences I think is very much on track to see the peaceful integration of China into the international system. I think it's entirely possible to do it.

It will depend on choices that China makes and we have tried to help create circumstances in which those choices will be peaceful ones.

QUESTION: Not all of us share your optimism about freedom and peace, democracy in Iraq. I just wonder, looking back to the Vietnam War, and that was also a fight for democracy, pushing back the boundary of communism, whether this is a fight for democracy that America should be out of. And I wonder what -- how worse it's got to be in Iraq before

America withdraws its troops, and equally the British troops as well, but in particular yourself. Thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. Well, we could spend a long time on the differences between Vietnam and Iraq, including questions of the nature of the Middle East at this point and the relationship of a different Middle East to the core security interests of the United States, or for that matter Great Britain. But we could perhaps have that debate sometime.

Let me just -- let me address the question of how long the United States feels that it needs to be there. We are there at the request of this, first the interim government, and we'll see -- I assume at the request of the national unity government when it is formed. We're there under UN mandate. We're there to try to train Iraqi forces so that they themselves can do the security tasks before them.

But I think it would be wrong to somehow leave Iraq to the mercies of the Zarqawis of the world or former Baathists who really do want to unravel the political process. And while it is true that there is a great deal of violence, that people can kill innocents and that can be the dominant image of Iraq on television or in the newspapers, there is another story to what is going on in Iraq; and that is that the people of Iraq, through leaders that are emerging, are trying to find a way to make use of democratic institutions to overcome their differences and to form a national unity government and to have a way to overcome those differences peacefully.

Now, part of the problem with the argument, I think, not just in Iraq but across the Middle East, that, well, it's unstable and therefore you ought to either withdraw or try to pull back or somehow admit that it was a mistake to unleash democracy in this region that really wasn't worried about it, is: What is the alternative? What is the alternative? Is the alternative that the Iraqi people were left somehow to Saddam Hussein? Was that really a more stable or a better situation? And Saddam Hussein wasn't going anywhere without military intervention. With all due respect, the sanctions and the Oil-for-Food program were not keeping Saddam Hussein either in check nor helping to bring him down. If the alternative in places like Lebanon is to leave Syrian power there, that makes no sense.

So I would ask, you know, what is the alternative to democracy and what is the alternative to a Middle East that is not a place that is a cauldron of frustration, where political conversation and political activity cannot be channeled into legitimate institutions, where authoritarianism reigns, where women are not full citizens? What is the alternative to the democratization of those places?

And if I could just -- one other point -- Lord Hurd said something that I want to associate myself with and I think it's sometimes misunderstood about American policy. It is not the notion that somehow you can impose democracy from the outside. I firmly believe that people have to take it up from within and they have to take it from the inside. But we all know that sometimes you have to create conditions under which then people are capable of doing that. Jack was saying earlier, had the United States not intervened in World War II, the ability of the German people to actually practice democracy would never have come about. In Iraq or Afghanistan, had those regimes not been overthrown, those people would not have had the ability to practice democracy.

But the United States is not going to deliver Iraqi democracy or Afghan democracy or Palestinian democracy. That is going to have to be done from within. But if you have a real belief, as I do, that this is something that is desired by all people, you have to believe that you don't have to impose democracy from the outside; you have to impose tyranny. And people, given a chance, will find a way to begin to resolve their differences by politics.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) from the Middle East program at Chatham House. There has been

much talk of reform in Saudi Arabia but students of the crucial educational sector remain indoctrinated by the most narrow of Wahabi Islamic officials. Given this, how seriously does the United States take the reform -- Saudi reform process, and in particular the educational system? And how do you propose to persuade them to move in towards a more meaningful democracy, hopefully liberal democracy?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, thank you. First of all, there is reform going on in Saudi Arabia, but at a very, let me say, measured pace, and, of course, in very narrow circumstances or in very narrow elements of the society. And I think you've put your finger on it. I think some of this is the educational system which, at one time, was more open actually to people being trained outside of the country. A lot of people were trained here in Great Britain, in the United States. And one thing that we've begun to do is to try to increase again the number of educational exchanges and students who will actually come from Saudi Arabia to go to school in the United States or in Great Britain or another. I think it's extremely important because it leads to a kind of opening up of the society.

I think it's also very important that the Saudis -- and they express a desire to do so -- take on the question of what kind of education people are getting. Are they being educated for the skills of the modern society or is it simply education that is closed to one set of beliefs and one set of doctrines.

I'll tell you an interesting story. I was just in Indonesia and I visited a madrasa in Indonesia. Now, perhaps in Great Britain, as in the United States, the word "madrasa," everybody recoils a bit because of some of the pictures that we've seen.

MR. NAUGHTIE: I live opposite one.

SECRETARY RICE: Yes, right.

MR. NAUGHTIE: (Inaudible.)

SECRETARY RICE: No, you're fine with it. No, but really, the word sometimes gets -- this was a madrasa that I wish most people could see, as I'm sure would be the case. Girls in cover learning math skills, boys learning math skills. Teachers who were enlightened. Religious traditions being respected, religious principles being respected, but a sense that these children should be educated also for the modern world. This is trying to happen in Pakistan, where there's been educational reform. And I think around the world this is going to be one of the most important elements of the opening up of these societies.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) *Financial Times*. Secretary Rice, can I ask about Iran's nuclear program? Do you believe that the time for developing the incentives for Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment has passed or do you sympathize instead with the ideas floated by British diplomats that what the international community should be doing is looking at coming up with some kind of improved offer if Iran does renew that suspension? Is the road ahead simply one of coercion and UN action or should we try and think about developing those incentives should Iran conform?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I think it's worth thinking about how we go forward to try and convince Iran that it is best for it to involve itself in negotiation rather than to continue to escalate and continue to cause tensions here. We'll have this discussion over the next several weeks. We've got 30 days -- or Iran has 30 days to respond to the presidential statement. I think it will be worth looking at all kinds of issues.

I would just note that thus far Iran has not been particularly interested in any offer that has been put to it. It is the Russians, the EU-3; everybody's put offers before the Iranians. The main issue is, of course, enrichment and reprocessing on Iranian soil, which is not acceptable

to the international community.

So I would just note that I think Iran is going to have to make a choice, and if there are ways to sharpen that choice, of course, we should look at ways to sharpen that choice. But the choice is a pretty clear one, and that is accept a way to the development of civil nuclear power that does not have the proliferation risk associated with enrichment and reprocessing on Iranian soil, or face deeper isolation from the international community. And we will see whether Iran understands that's the choice it's got.

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